Pre-intermediate Unit 3a

Superlatives: Adjectives and adverbs

Zurich, Switzerland's largest city, has been voted the best city in the world to live in. Zurich's parks make it one of the greenest cities in the world, its air is the least polluted and it's one of the cities where you can travel most comfortably. And with the third lowest crime rate, it is certainly one of the safest.

Presentation

Use the superlative form to show that one thing or person in a group has got more or less of a quality than all the others in the same group: *Zurich is Switzerland's* ***largest*** *city.* (= no other city in Switzerland is larger.)

Adjectives

To form superlative adjectives, use *-est* or *most / least*.

Short adjectives (one syllable or two syllables ending in -y)

adjective + *-est*
large → *largest, green* → *greenest*
big → *biggest, easy* → *easiest*
pretty → *prettiest*

Long adjectives (two syllables or more)

most / least + adjective
expensive → *most expensive, exciting* → *most exciting,*
polluted → *least polluted*

Some adjectives have two possible superlative forms: *most polite / politest, most gentle / gentlest*

Some adjectives are irregular: *good* → *best, bad* → *worst, far* → *furthest*

See page 233: Spelling rules

the and possessive adjectives

You often use *the*, a *possessive* or *possessive 's* before a superlative adjective: ***The*** *best city,* ***its*** *best attraction, Switzerland's largest city.*

Common expressions

Superlative adjectives are often used with …

- one / some of the … : ***one of the*** *greenest cities,* ***some of the*** *cleanest water*
- the second / third etc. … in … : ***the third*** *lowest* ***in*** *Europe*
- the most … ever … : *the most exciting city you'll* ***ever*** *visit*

Adverbs

Form superlative adverbs in the same way as superlative adjectives, using *-est* or *most / least*.

Short adverbs (one syllable)

adverb + *-est*
hard → *hardest, fast* → *fastest*

Long adverbs (two syllables or more)

most / least + adverb
safely → *most / least safely*
comfortably → *most / least comfortably*

Some adverbs are irregular: *well* → *best, badly* → *worst*

We can use superlative adverbs both with and without *the*:

It's the city where you travel ***most comfortably*** */* ***the most comfortably.***

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1 Complete the text by adding *most* or *-est* to the adjectives in brackets. Make any necessary spelling changes.

Tierra del Fuego is one of the [1] ..... (fascinating) places on earth. Its snowy mountains offer some of the [2] ..... (spectacular) views you will ever see. The [3] ..... (high) peak stands at 2448 m above sea level. The [4] ..... (easy) access to Tierra del Fuego is from Argentina, and Ushuaia is the [5] ..... (popular) destination with tourists. But the [6] ..... (southern) town in South America, and the world, is Puerto Toro, Chile. It is also one of the [7] ..... (small) towns in South America with a population of under fifty people. A visit to Puerto Toro will certainly be one of the [8] ..... (unforgettable) experiences of your life.

2 Complete the sentences using *most, least* or *-est* and the adjectives and adverbs in the box.

cold	expensive	fast	high	hot	northern	small	visited

1 Ulaan Batar, Outer Mongolia, is the ..... capital city in the world. It has an average temperature of −1.3° C.

2 Bangkok is the ..... city in the world, with an average temperature of 30° C all year round.

3 Chonqing, China, is probably the ..... growing city in the world. Experts believe its size will double from ten million to twenty million in the next thirteen years.

4 Paris is the ..... city in the world. It has over thirty million tourists a year.

5 The Vatican City is probably the world's ..... capital city. Just under 1000 people live inside its walls.

6 La Paz, Bolivia, situated at 3640 m above sea level, is the ..... capital city in the world.

7 Asuncion in Paraguay is possibly the ..... capital city in the world. The cost of living in Asuncion is only a third of the cost of living in New York.

8 Hammerfest, Norway, situated just outside the Arctic Circle, is one of the ..... cities in the world.

3 Complete the conversations with the comparative or superlative form of the adjectives in brackets. Then listen and check.

Conversation 1

A: So, what did you think of Prague?

B: Amazing. It's definitely [1] ..... (beautiful) than any of the other cities I've visited so far. But, I must admit, the food is [2] ..... (good) in Paris.

Conversation 2

C: What's [3] ..... (good) way to get to London?

D: Well, the train probably gets you there [4] ..... (quick). It's definitely [5] ..... (fast) than going by car.

Conversation 3

E: What was the hotel like?

F: Well, it wasn't [6] ..... (comfortable) hotel I've ever stayed in! It was on one of [7] ..... (busy) streets in the town – it was really noisy. And the second night was [8] ..... (bad) than the first. The air-conditioning wasn't working and there was a party going on in the street. That was probably [9] ..... (bad) night's sleep I've ever had!

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